



## The Victorian bushfires and extreme weather events: Media coverage, crisis and communication

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### Abstract:

The 2009 'Black Saturday' Victorian bushfires claimed the lives of 173 people and have become known as the worst fire event in Australian history. Victoria has been at the centre of two other significant Australian fire disasters - 'Black Friday' in 1939 and the 1983 'Ash Wednesday' fires in south-eastern Australia that claimed the lives of 47 people in Victoria. As media scholar and commentator Michael Gawenda has noted, the media not only report an 'event' - like the Victorian bushfires or the tsunami in the South Pacific - but in a sense create and define it. Print and electronic media coverage of extreme weather events therefore raises a multitude of issues about the media's role in serving the community before, during and after a crisis, while also trying to produce the best possible reportage in a competitive industry undergoing dramatic change. This issue of MIA provides a venue for critical, empirical engagement with media coverage and representation, and the role of journalism and journalists in reporting national and international bushfires, tsunamis, hurricanes and other extreme weather events, with a special focus on the 2009 Victorian bushfires. Its goal is to address the ramifications of an industry in flux - indeed, some may say crisis - driven by technological advances, staff reductions and media organisations under financial pressure, and to explore the ways in which such extreme weather events have impacted media practices and policy.

**Source:** <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1329878X1013700108>

### Resource Description

#### Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

#### Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

#### Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Human Conflict/Displacement

# Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

**Extreme Weather Event:** Wildfires

**Geographic Feature:** ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

**Geographic Location:** ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

**Non-United States:** Australasia

**Health Impact:** ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Injury

**Mitigation/Adaptation:** ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

**Resource Type:** ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

**Timescale:** ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

**Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:** ☒

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content